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ABSTRACT

This report discusses the goals, activities, and recommendations of the Employer Child Care Development Council. An increasing number of businesses in Fairfax county, Virginia are offering some type of child care service as an employee benefit. In January 1987, the Board of Supervisors established the Employer Child Care Development Council as a public and private partnership between government and business designed to help businesses develop child care assistance benefits for their employees. The council was also intended to provide an effective means of reaching decision makers in business and industry. The report describes activities and recommendations of the council in terms of these objectives: (1) to educate the business community regarding trends and options in employer-supported child care and provide technical assistance to businesses planning to use some of the options; (2) to maintain a high profile in the business community in order to promote increased employer participation in child care benefits; (3) to identify incentives and remove barriers in an effort to increase the development of child care centers in business settings; and (4) to advocate for child care in order to increase funding and availability of resources for employers, employees, and the general child care community. (RJC)

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EMPLOYER CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

REPORT

TO

THE FAIRFAX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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I. GROWTH OF EMPLOYER SUPPORTED CHILD CARE SERVICES IN FAIRFAX COUNTY - 1986 -1988

An ever increasing number of businesses in Fairfax County are starting to offer some type of child care service as an employee benefit. In December 1986, the time that the Board created the Employer Child Care Development Council, only one Fairfax County employer offered child care at the worksite, four employers contracted for child care resource and referral services, and a handful of employers were beginning to explore the feasibility of combining efforts and resources to develop a child care center near their collective worksites. Since the end of 1986, there has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of businesses that are providing child care benefits. Currently,

* Over 100 Fairfax County employers are offering or are planning to offer a child care benefit to their employees. This rate of participation is nearly double the rate of participation by employers nationwide.

* There are four employer-sponsored child care centers located near or at the workplace.

* Eight new centers to be located in or near business-related sites are projected to open within the next year.

* Thirty-nine employers are participating in consortium models of child care centers located near the worksites.

* Forty-nine employers have contracted with Office for Children Child Care Resource System to assist their employees in finding appropriate child care. Over 7000 working parent families have access to these services through their employers.

* Thirteen companies have implemented some type of child care financial assistance, such as vouchers, salary reductions, and direct subsidies.

* The Employer Child Care Council has provided information and technical assistance to 232 businesses on establishing child care benefits for their employees.

* Each week as many as five individuals looking for employment contact the Employer Child Care Council to find out which companies offer child care benefits.

II. EMPLOYER CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

In January 1987, the Board of Supervisors established the Employer Child Care Development Council as a public/private partnership between government and business to assist businesses in developing child care assistance benefits for their employees. The Board recognized that neither the business community, nor the County, alone, could begin to address the child care needs of the dual career and single parent families who are the major part of our expanding workforce in Fairfax County.

The Board created the Council to provide an effective means of reaching decision makers within business and industry. It recognized that the goal of increasing employer interest and involvement in child care as a workplace issue could best be accomplished by business men and women talking to and informing each other. The Board appointed a fourteen member Council representing a cross section of Fairfax County businesses to carry out this important mission.

In its first months of operation, the Council conducted a survey of local businesses to ascertain which, if any employers were assisting its employees with their child care needs, and to explore their attitudes toward employer child care initiatives. The survey results revealed that employers viewed child care benefits as having a positive impact. While attitudes were positive, these employers indicated that they were not informed about their own employees' child care needs and had little or no information about the current range of child care assistance and options to meet those needs. Additionally, employers indicated that they were concerned about the possible expense of implementing child care benefits and were interested in exploring tax credits or matching grants as a way of reducing the expense.

The results of the employer survey provided valuable information for setting specific Council objectives. In response to what we learned from the survey, our first objective was to develop and provide detailed information to a wide range of county businesses on the various child care assistance options companies might offer. The following programs and strategies were implemented to meet that objective.

* We presented a series of roundtable seminars, each one highlighting a different employer child care option several times each year.

* We created, produced and distributed a newsletter Child Care: The Business Edition to a wide range of Fairfax County businesses.

* We established a clearinghouse of information on various child care options, needs of the workforce, and impact of child care on businesses.

* We provided technical assistance on employer supported child care benefits to individual businesses considering implementing one or more of those benefits.

In the summer of 1988 the Council met to review its activities of the first year and a half and to establish a work plan for the coming year. As a result of this review, we renewed our commitment to the overall goal of increasing the number of employers in Fairfax County who provide child care benefits for their employees, and at the same time revised some specific activities and strategies. These newly articulated goals, how we are meeting them, and our recommendations for the future, are the subject of this report.

III. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

TO EDUCATE THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AS TO CURRENT TRENDS AND OPTIONS IN EMPLOYER SUPPORTED CHILD CARE AND PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO BUSINESSES PLANNING TO IMPLEMENT SOME OF THOSE OPTIONS.

Activities and Results

* Two hundred thirty-two businesses have requested and received information and technical assistance on child care trends, options for employer involvement, and implementation of child care benefits. (See Appendix A for breakdown on type of information/assistance requested.)

* Child Care: The Business Edition newsletter was published three times and each issue has been distributed to over 4500 businesses. Each issue spotlights local employer efforts on behalf of child care and gives an in-depth look at one of the child care options.

* Roundtable seminars were presented on seven different subjects. Two hundred twenty-six business men and women attended the seminars. Flyers advertising each series of two roundtables are produced and sent to 4500 businesses. (See Appendix B for a listing of the Roundtable seminars that have been presented and are planned for the future.)

* A follow-up survey was conducted with 125 of the initial employers who had requested assistance from the Council. We were interested in tracking the progress companies were making in selecting and/or implementing a child care benefit. We found that:

> 24% of the businesses had already determined a child care option that was to be implemented in the near future.
>
> 28% of the businesses were planning or had completed a feasibility study and a decision was pending.
>
> 18% of the businesses had designated a task force or individual to study child care.

75% of the businesses were still interested in child care benefits and were still considering offering such a benefit.

Future Directions and Recommendations

Providing one-to-one technical assistance to help businesses in learning about, selecting, and implementing an appropriate child care option will continue to be a top priority. These objective, professional, educational activities of the Council will be continued. They represent a very effective means of communicating to the business community that child care is a workplace issue. Our efforts will also include new employers in the community.

We plan to develop profiles of child care need, demand and availability by planning district. Employers frequently request this type of information.

TO MAINTAIN A HIGH PROFILE IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO PROMOTE GREATER EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION IN CHILD CARE BENEFITS

Activities and Results

* A brochure marketing the concept of employer supported child care has been developed and is being distributed to businesses. The brochure lists the various benefit options that employers may offer, highlights the advantages of each benefit option, and describes the Employer Child Care Council. The underlying message is that businesses which provide child care benefits to its employees will gain an edge over the competition. This edge includes the ability to recruit and retain valuable employees, realize an increase in productivity, and enjoy a more positive public image.

* The Council is producing a video featuring those Fairfax County businesses that offer child care benefits. The video will be shown on the local cable station and will be used when Council members make presentations to the business community.

* Council members regularly meet with other business groups, and professional and civic organizations to talk about child care as a workplace issue and to provide

information about the services of the Council. This has included participating as a liaison between a particular group and the Council, making presentations at meetings, and briefing task forces set up by various groups on child care. We have worked with the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, NAIOP, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Junior League of Northern Virginia, Washington Personnel Association, ReEntry Women's Employment, ASPA (Dulles Chapter), Commercial Real Estate, Women of Northern Virginia, Virginia Employers Association, International Personnel Management Association, Leadership Fairfax, Economic Development Authority, Northern Virginia Planning Commission, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, and the Child Care Advisory Council.

* The Council has responded to requests for information and technical assistance from groups in the Washington Metropolitan area as well as from groups outside the region. Jurisdictions in Virginia, Maryland, and the District frequently look to the Fairfax County Employer Child Care Council for guidance in working with businesses to provide child care benefits. Requests for assistance have also come from Florida, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Texas, Colorado, Tennessee, New Jersey, Maryland, Minnesota, and Indiana.

* The Council has convened a core group of human resource managers in business, industry, and government. This core group is developing a plan for targeting other human resource managers in similar organizational settings. After working with many businesses, the Council has determined that the human resource manager is most often the agent of change within the organization. This person is usually aware of the factors impacting employee productivity and retention and has access to the decision-making structure within the corporation.

Future Directions and Recommendations

A more detailed marketing plan that will further impact the level of involvement by business in child care will be developed. These efforts and promotional materials will be aimed at human resource managers as an agent of organizational change.

TO IDENTIFY INCENTIVES AND TO REMOVE BARRIERS IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILD CARE CENTERS IN BUSINESS SETTINGS

Activities and Results

* An Incentives Committee was formed as a subcommittee of the Council and charged with identifying the barriers that currently discourage the creation of more child care facilities in and near workplace settings. This subcommittee was also challenged to come up with a plan of incentives and/or requirements that would result in more child care being created in the workplace.

* Developers and builders active in Fairfax County were surveyed as to the barriers preventing the development of more child care centers in office and industrial parks. Major barriers that were identified included the complicated and time consuming nature of the permitting process. Many respondents indicated that the additional time required and money lost while waiting for the necessary permits outweighed willingness to consider child care centers in their developments.

* A series of meetings between Incentive Committee members and appropriate County agencies were held. Topics for discussion included identifying I and C categories that allow child care centers "by right", analyzing parking requirements in office buildings offering child care, and exploring the possibility of offering density credits for projects including child care centers.

* We are conducting a review of the step by step, agency by agency process an applicant needs to negotiate when starting a child care center. We are attempting to identify how, where, and why the process can break down. In the past six months the Council has followed the process with twenty-six individual/groups. We have identified the following problems and issues:

There is a lack of awareness of how to access the various agencies and services involved in the permitting process.

Because there is no single point of entry, it is difficult to identify and record recurring problems.

There is no consistent mechanism for informing applicants of changes in regulations that occur

between the time of application and final inspection.

Applicants sometimes report inconsistent state and local interpretation of codes within county agencies.

There is a shortage of available, affordable sites for child care facilities.

* We have begun a study of child care incentives and requirements enacted in other states and localities to determine their effectiveness. Of particular interest are those provisions that have resulted in the development of resources (exactions, proffers, grants, low cost loans, etc) to develop child care projects.

* Council members are actively participating in the Comprehensive Plan Review to ensure that the relationship between child care and land use and transportation are given due consideration.

Future Directions and Recommendations

Recommendations to remove certain barriers to the development of child care facilities in industrial and office park settings will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors by summer of 1989.

Recommendations of incentives/requirements which could increase the supply of child care facilities in and near business settings will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in late spring.

In response to the findings of the study on the process of starting a child care center, the Employer Child Care Council recommends that the Office for Children be directed to act as an Ombudsman between the County and applicants for permits for starting a child care center.

In this role, the Ombudsman would:

inform applicants as to the nature of the process,

coordinate interagency meetings to facilitate the process when appropriate,

compile a central manual that includes child care regulations from all agencies involved in the process,

track the progress of applicants in order to identify how, where, and why the system breaks down,

and work with representatives from other agencies to establish a consistent policy for handling interpretations of regulations.

TO ADVOCATE FOR CHILD CARE SO THAT FUNDING AND RESOURCES ARE MADE MORE AVAILABLE TO EMPLOYERS, EMPLOYEES, AND THE GENERAL CHILD CARE COMMUNITY.

Activities and Results

* The Council helped obtain funding from the Junior League of Northern Virginia for recruitment of family day care providers. Recruitment efforts were targeted toward Herndon, Chantilly, Centreville, and Reston--four geographic areas where the availability of child care providers represents a critical shortage.

* Paul Arnone, former Chairman of the Council, was appointed by the Governor to serve on the Governor's Corporate Advisory Commission on Employers' Initiatives For Child Day Care. This Commission recommended thirteen action steps to stimulate employer child care initiatives across the state. These included establishing an Office for Child Care, marketing child care to the corporate community, establishing a Virginia Business Advisory Council for Child Day Care, offering matching funds for local child care efforts, developing tax and economic incentives for employers, and developing child care benefits for state employees. Several of these recommendations have already been implemented.

Future Directions and Recommendations

The Council will continue to follow legislation that impacts employer involvement in child care and will advocate for quality, affordable, accessible child care when appropriate. Briefing packets will be developed

to inform decision makers of the trends in child care, employer supported child care benefits, and the Employer Child Care Council.

The Council will continue to work with other groups to create funding sources and to explore other ways in which business can contribute to the development of quality, affordable child care within the community at large.

IV. HOUSEKEEPING ITEMS

The Employer Child Care Development Council has evaluated its needs from an organizational standpoint and agrees that two aspects deserve modification - the name of the Council and membership criteria.

Due to the difficulty most individuals have in enunciating in the correct order the different parts of the name, the Council has informally begun using Employer Child Care Council and would like to make this a formal name change.

Membership on the Council has included a wide range of types of business and has tapped a rich reservoir of specialty skills and talents. The current members feel that the inclusion of members from some other fields would complement those already represented. We would like to modify the existing categories slightly and add two new categories. The membership categories as they exist currently and the modifications we would like to make follow:

CURRENT	MODIFICATIONS	APPOINTEE
Industrial Parks	Real Estate Trade Assoc.	Claudia Ostrander NAIOP
Organizational	High Technology	Paul Arnone Enginerring Research Associates
Human/Public Relations	Public Relations	VACANT
Retail/Human Resources	Retail	James Foley Hechinger Company
Human Resources/	Professional Services	Eva Pickard Volt Temporaries
Hotel/Human Resources	Hospitality	Marcy Iszard Marriott Corporation
Building/Facilities	Real Estate	Kathrym MacLane West Group
Legal	Legal	Melanie Reilly McGuire, Woods, Battle, & Booth
Banking/Financial	Financial Services	VACANT
Hospital/Human Relations	Medical Services	James Scott Fairfax Hospital Systems
Publishing/Communi-cations	Publishing/Communi-cations	Alan Weisberg Journal Newspapers
Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce	Barry Reisig Arthur Andersen & Co.
Child Care Advisory Bd.	Child Care Advisory Bd.	Victoria Sabo
	Retail	NEW/VACANT
	Corporate Human Resources	NEW/VACANT
EX OFFICIO MEMBERS		
Office for Children	Office for Children	Judith Rosen
Economic Development Authority	Economic Development Authority	James Scampavia

The Council requests that the Board of Supervisors concur with these two suggestions.

Appendix A

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BY TYPE

REQUESTS	FREQUENCY
Information on child care options	91
Function of Employer Child Care Council	65
On-site/near-site child care	47
Resource and referral service	29
Flexible benefits/DCAP plans	27
Needs assessments surveys	19
Directory of child care consultants	19
Consortium models	17
How to start a child care center (includes requests for demographic information on child care)	39
Child care in office/industrial parks	11

** The total number of businesses requesting information and technical assistance is 232.

APPENDIX B

ROUNDTABLE SEMINARS FOR BUSINESSES

"CHILD CARE CHOICES: OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS"
Presented by: Dr. Dana Friedman CONFERENCE BOARD
Ms. Cathy Salvano MCDONALD'S
Mr. Robert Northrup WILLIAMS, THATCHER, & RAND
Mr. Ronald Geiger BDM CORPORATION
Date: December 4, 1987

"EVALUATING CHILD CARE OPTIONS FOR YOUR COMPANY"
Presented by: Ms. Carol Ann Rudolph CHILD CARE MANAGEMENT RESOURCES
Date: January 29, 1988

"LEGAL AND LIABILITY ISSUES IN CHILD CARE"
Presented by: Attorney MCGUIRE, WOODS, BATTLE, & BOOTHE
Date: February 26, 1988

"LINKING WITH EXISTING PROGRAMS"
Presented by: FRIED & SHER, INC.
Date: March 25, 1988

"CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL PROGRAMS"
Presented by: Ms. Karen Good OFFICE FOR CHILDREN
Ms. Therese Keegan COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Date: April 29, 1988

"BUYING MORE WITHOUT SPENDING MORE"
Presented by: Michael Boomer, Jr. INSURANCE MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATORS, INC.
Date: May 20, 1988

"EMPLOYER-SPONSORED CHILD CARE CENTERS"
Presented by: Tom Grubisich CONNECTION
FRIED & SHER, INC.
Date: December 16, 1988

"THE CORPORATE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS"
Presented by: Marcy Iszard MARRIOTT CORPORATION
Gary Brown DECISION DATA COLLECTION
Date: January 19, 1989

"CHILD CARE OPTIONS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES"
Presented by: Jinnie Potter PROSPECT ASSOCIATES
Anne Marie Smith HOGAN & HARTSON
Date: March 10, 1989

"CORPORATE POLICIES FOR WORKING PARENTS"
To be presented by: Jean Linehan BUREAU OF NATIONAL AFFAIRS
Date: April 21, 1989